

Ellen de Bruijne PROJECTS



Tyna Adebawale, Xee #shcalledmewoman, 2021, acrylic on canvas.

Tyna Adebawale
she called me woman
October 16 - November 20

Ellen de Bruijne PROJECTS is pleased to introduce the representation of **Tyna Adebawale** with the solo show *she called me woman*. Tyna Adebawale's multidisciplinary artistic practice has a strong focus on societal processes and constructions regarding gender, queerness, ostracism, community, and identity politics. With an interest in the gender fluidity in the African cultural and spiritual histories prior to colonisation, the artist reflects on contemporary Nigerian society and its diaspora and its echoes in other cultures.

Opening Saturday October 16 from 17 to 19 in the presence of the artist

Having gone through an emigration process herself, Adebowale is interested in the understandings of home and community. An exiled body is a home on the move; a queer exiled body is a particularly beleaguered one. In the nomadic hindrances that displacement brings about, a craving to socially anchor oneself implies a need for community. That is why the artist is actively building one in which asylum seekers and refugees' journeys orbit around common struggles and desires. Not only do they become the models of her paintings, but they are also involved in self-initiated social projects such as a *uneme | mobile library*. On other occasions the models are queer activists, like the three times painted Azeenarh Mohammed, who alongside Rafeeat Aliyu edited *She Called Me Woman* (2018, Cassava Republic), a collection of thirty stories of queer Nigerian women.

Intrinsic in Adebowale's work are ongoing processes of questioning and representation of queer bodies, stories, and histories. The models in her paintings are infused with raw emotion and defiance while exuding an unapologetic power in reclaimed intimacies and visibilities. Just like the vividness through which they are painted, they are testimonies of the dualities of joy and agony, of belonging and displacement, of tenderness and harshness. There is no other position but to see them and be, even for a moment, unavoidably faced with their striking presence. Their monumentality is of a rebelling new-found comfort in their bodies, despite being constantly othered.



Tyna Adebowale, *Resty #beeasy*, 2021, acrylic on canvas.

When we contemplate Tyna Adebowale's work, we become aware of the unrelenting negotiation of relationships, sexualities, and freedom of people identifying in the queer spectrum. The difficulties of being and striving under the restraints of heteronormative biopolitics and the pervasive religious substrate of colonialism are fought with an artistic practice that centres dissidence in beautiful and powerful depictions of empowered resistance.

Tyna Adebowale (1982, Nigeria) lives and works in Amsterdam after her two-year residency at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten (2016-2018). Recent exhibitions include *Refresh Amsterdam 2020-2021* (Amsterdam Museum), *The Future is Female* (CODA Museum, Appeldorn) 2020, Lang Art solo booth at Art Rotterdam (2019), *What if Women Rule The World?* (Garage-Rotterdam 2019). She is the second recipient of the Jacqueline Van Tongeren Fellowship For African Artists (2017-2018), 3Package Deal Award (2019-2020) Recipient from the AFK grant, Amsterdam. She recently became a second-year artist in residency at the prestigious BlackRock Senegal, run by Kehinde Wiley.



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Gallery hours

Wed till Fri 11 – 18 h | Sat 13 – 18 h